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Title: Need to enhance the strength of judges with a view to reduce the pendency of cases in the courts.

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI): I want to bring to the kind notice of this august House about the pathetic situation of Judicial System in this country.

As many as 37.1 lakh cases are pending in 21 High Courts and 2.48 crore cases are pending in Lower Courts. During 1999, it was 27.5 lakh and 2 crores respectively. The public are spending their whole life and money to get remedy in the courts. These pendencies are due to large scale vacancies in the Judiciary and inadequacy of infrastructural facilities particularly in lower judiciary. The sanctioned strength in 21 High Courts are 792 and working strength is 586. It constitutes 26%. Out of the sanctioned strength of 15,399 Subordinate Judges in the country, the working strength is 12,368. The existing vacancies accounting to 24%. The judicial officers in Subordinate Courts are getting very low salary and not provided with facilities like any residential quarters and vehicles, etc. The salaries of the Judicial Officers should be raised to ensure efficient functioning of judiciary. To reduce the pendency of cases, the existing vacancies are required to be filled at the earliest and the strength of judges has to be increased by appointing nearly 10,000 judges in Lower Judiciary to clear backlog cases within 2 years. The salary of Subordinate judicial Officer starts with Rs. 9,000/- and Rs. 35,000/- for High Court Judges. It is very low. This has to be increased to a minimum of Rs. 25,000/- and Rs. 60,000/- respectively. Through Central Assistance scheme, adequate funds should be allocated to provide infrastructural facilities like court complexes, residential quarters for Judicial Officers and Bar Rooms for lawyers.

I shall, therefore, urge upon the Government to take immediate steps to reduce the pendency of cases by filling all pending vacancies and appointing more Judges in all the courts in the country.